Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Varadarajan to undertake a survey of the Agra-Mathura trapezium and to submit a report regarding the sources of pollution in the trapezium and the necessary measures to control them. The members of this committee are persons of scientific eminence and representatives from Government organisations.

Search of an India Bound Ship by the US Navy

4545. SHRI K. R. MALKANI:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the U.S. Navy intercepted and searched the Ship Gulf Splendour, manned by an all-Indian crew and carrying 2,200 tonnes of dried dates from Abadan, Iran, to India, as reported in 'The Pioneer' dated the 5th February, 1995;

(b) whether the ship held in Umm-al-Quwain in U.A.E.;

(c) whether the USA accuses India of having loaded the stuff in Iraq; and

(d) if so, whether it is an offence under any International law or U.N. resolution to trade food-stuffs with Iraq?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Ship "Gulf Splendour" intercepted by the US Navy has since been released. The US authorities have stated that the ship, which was owned by a private company, had loaded dates in Iraq. Under the UN Security Council resolution 661, import of all commodities and products originating in Iraq or exported therefrom is prohibited.

Bilateral Relations with Maldives

4546. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps have been taken by Government for strengthening bilateral ties with Maldives; and

(b) if so, the details of assistance offered by Government to that island country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The assistance offered by the Government of India to Maldives includes ongoing cooperation in the manning, equipping and functioning of the 200-bed Indira Gandhi Memorial hospital; the construction and equipping of an institute for vocational and technical training and in human resources development, and preservation of monuments. In addition Government of India offers scholarships for training of Maldivian personnel in technical, engineering and vocational courses. Proposal for cooperation in the fields of distance education, and environment are also under discussion.

Visit of Iranian President

4547. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Iranian President visited India in the third week of April, 1995;

(b) if so, the gist of talks the foreign dignitary had with Government;

(c) the leaders, the foreign dignitary met during his visit to the country;